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SIMPLIFIED BANJO METHOD

WITHOUT THE AID OF NOTES.

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H. T. CORNETT, PRINT, N. Y.

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WITHOUT THE AID OF NOTES.

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Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS AND PRINCIPLES.

COPYRIGHTED, 1879, BY H. A. CONVERSE.

THE FOUR LINES.

FIRST STRING.

SECOND STRING.

THIRD STRING.

FOURTH STRING.

SHORT (*O*) OR "THUMB" STRING.

The banjo has four long strings, and one short string. *The short string is so rarely required to be "stopped," that, for the purposes of simplification and general facility, it is deemed unnecessary that it should be represented by a line : but where it is required to be used, it will be indicated by an italic *o* placed just below the bottom (fourth) line. It is to be sounded with the thumb. The four principal strings are represented by four parrellel lines, as above : the upper (first) line representing first string ; the second line, the second string ; the third line, the third string ; and the fourth line, the fourth or bass string. The bass string is located next to the short string.

*Pressing the strings firmly down upon the finger-board, and thereby producing the different sounds, is called "stopping" the strings.

HOW TO READ THE LINES.

The italic *O*, placed upon a line, denotes that the string which that line represents is to be sounded open, otherwise, the notes (or sounds) that are required to be made by "stopping," (pressing down the strings with the fingers of the left hand) are represented by *numerals placed upon the respective lines.* These numerals indicate the frets (see "Frets) upon the Fingerboard, at which the strings must be stopped to produce the desired sounds.

CHORDS.

Two or more numerals, placed perpendicularly upon the lines, denotes a "chord," and the several notes represented by these numerals must be sounded together, (simultaneously), as one note.

HOW TO TUNE THE BANJO.

Commence with the fourth (bass) string, which tune to *A. Stopping the fourth string at the seventh fret, produces the sound to which the third string is to be tuned; stopping the third string at the fourth fret, gives the sound required for the second string; stopping the second string at the third fret, gives the sound to which the first string must be tuned, and, finally, stopping the first string at the fifth fret, gives the sound required for the short string.

FINGERING.

The "Guitar" style of fingering is, as its title would suggest, an adaptation of the manner of performing upon that instrument—producing the sounds by *pulling* the strings with the tips of the fingers. To execute a piece in the *legitimate* "Banjo" style, the right hand must be partly closed, allowing the first finger to project slightly, but all the fingers held firmly together in this position. Placing the hand thus partly closed upon the strings,

*A tuning fork or pitch pipe, pitched to this sound, can be obtained at any Music Dealers.

allowing the first finger (nail) to rest upon the first string, and the thumb to catch upon the fifth string, will illustrate the position. The hand is supported by the fore-arm resting upon the rim of the banjo. The strings are to be sounded by striking with the first finger (nail) only or by pulling with the thumb. The signs for the left hand fingering will be found written above, and for the right hand fingering below the lines. A cross X indicates the thumb, and the numerals, 1, 2, 3, 4 : the fingers.

Sounds that are required to be made by pulling (or "snapping") the strings with a *finger of the left hand*, will be designated by a numeral enclosed in a half circle, thus, ⌒2⌒ ; the numeral naming the finger making the "pull." Where it becomes necessary that the sound should be made by stopping a string with one finger, and, while so holding it, pulling it with another finger of the left hand, the sign will be as follows : $\frac{4}{2}$—or whatever numerals may be required—the lower numeral naming the finger which "stops," and the numeral in the half circle, the finger which is to pull the string.

FRETS.

Especially with beginners, and also for general study and practice, the banjo fingerboard should be "fretted" with narrow inlaid strips of light colored wood, leaving the surface perfectly smooth. The following is the rule for fretting, or placing the frets. At one-eighteenth of the distance between the nut and the bridge, place the first fret; at one-eighteenth of the distance between the *first fret* and the bridge place the second fret; continue by dividing the distance from the last obtained fret and the bridge for as many frets as may be desired. The distance from any one fret to the next is one-half tone, (semi-tone).

POSITIONS. THE BARRÉ.

"Holding a position," means, stopping two or more strings at the same time, in order to sound a chord, or, as it frequently occurs, to execute several single notes which lie under a position, thereby greatly simplifying the left hand fingering, and rendering unnecessary the stopping of each string separately, which otherwise would be the case. Positions can be taken at each fret, and are numbered accordingly; the lowest note of the position taking the name of the fret. Where necessary, the positions will be indicated by a large numeral, and the letter *P* placed above the lines.

"THE BARRE" is of frequent use in holding many of the positions upon the fingerboard, and is formed by pressing a finger of the left hand (generally the first finger) across the fingerboard, stopping two, three, or four strings, and leaving the remaining fingers free to stop the strings above as may be required. Barres are indicated by a large numeral and a capital *B*, placed above the lines.

TIME, OR MOVEMENT.

It is quite natural, with nearly every person, to beat the time evenly, of any tune with which they are familiar, or to unconsciously march with regularity of movement ("keep time") to the music of a band, or other instruments; and to be able to accomplish as much, and thereby obtain the correct movement of new pieces, it is only necessary that the learner should understand the proper divisions in the movement; be able to analyze the piece he may be learning, and to place the beats (steps) in their proper places. This knowledge can be, as will be seen, very easily gained, and by an observance of the few brief and simple rules herein given, the learner will quickly master all seeming obstacles and difficulties, and, instead of groping around in a confusion of tones, guessing and experimenting in a hopeless endeavor to discover, by some lucky stroke, the author's idea, he will find his pathway clear; the task a pleasure, and the result all he may desire.

MEASURES, OR PORTIONS.

Every written piece of music is divided into regular measures, of equal quantity with each other, by perpendicular lines drawn across the four parallel lines; the principal object being to regulate and simplify the arrangement of the beats or steps. Otherwise these lines are of no value, merely imaginary, and have no effect upon the movement. While performing each measure, a certain *fixed* number of beats are to be given, according to the character of the particular movement.

HOW TO PRACTICE.

No matter how slowly the learner may proceed in reading and executing a new piece, if he will persistently and carefully beat his foot, or count the steps *aloud* (to do both is much better) while so doing, *at the proper places only*, the inclination to beat upon those particular notes will soon become fixed, and when a sufficient proficiency in execution has been acquired to produce an evenness and regularity in the playing, *the desired character and movement of the piece will be attained.*

BEATING AND COUNTING TIME.

In giving character and expression to a piece, it will be found that some of the sounds must, necessarily, be allowed a much longer duration of time than others; that often two, three, or more notes are to be executed in rapid succession, or in the time frequently allowed for a single note; or that the performer must cease playing for one, two, or more beats or portions of beats; or that the beat must be given first, and, after which, and before the next beat, one, two, or more notes are to be sounded, and also, that certain notes in each measure must receive a particular accent, or emphasis, *i. e.*, played more forcibly than the others.

The beats (steps) are indicated by small dots placed under the notes where they are to be given.

In pieces requiring four beats to be given in each measure, the learner is advised to count the beats aloud, thus: *"one and, two and, three and, four and;" beginning again with "one" at the next measure, and beating the foot at *the instant* of pronouncing each count. The same rule applies to movements containing two counts. In these movements the *first note* of each count should be accented.

In movements having three counts in each measure, a beat is given on *the first count* only—which is also the regular accented note—but the remaining "two," "three" must be pronounced where indicated by the dots.

In movements having six counts in each measure, the beat is given on the first and fourth counts only—which are also the only regular accented notes—but the counts are to be pronounced as indicated by the dots.

ACCENTED NOTES are indicated by a short dash placed below them, thus

SIGNS OF SILENCE OR RESTS.

A cross, X, *placed upon the lines*, denotes silence, and must be observed by allowing its full duration of time, according to the beats, before proceeding.

The sign placed upon a line, is also a mark of silence, although of shorter duration than the cross. It frequently occurs on the beat, when notes are to follow and be sounded before making the next beat; and also in combinations of rapid notes, where it becomes the length of any one of those notes, producing a slight pause. In the latter case, its effect is quite well produced by accenting the preceding note.

---

*The word "and" is frequently used in counting time, as, when pronounced between the regular counts, it assists to fill the quantity of time required between the sounds.

GRACE NOTES are extra notes, other than the regular notes belonging to each measure, and are introduced to embellish the piece. They must be executed quickly, so as not to affect the regular movement or count. They precede the regular notes, and will be recognized by a small cross, X, separating them from the regular note, thus : Grace. 2 X Regular. 0

THE TRIPLET is a group of three notes, to be sounded generally to one beat, and sometimes to a half beat, or other quantities easily understood by observing the sign of the beat—the dot.

THE SLURRED NOTE, is executed by forcibly sounding the preceding note, and with the required finger of the *left hand*, quickly stopping the string before it has ceased to vibrate, thereby producing another—the "slurred"—tone. It is indicated by a curved line ⌒ joining the two notes.

THE WAVED LINE, ~~~~~~~ placed under several notes, indicates the "slide." It is used, principally, in the regular banjo style of execution, and is executed by sliding the first finger (nail) of the right hand across the required strings in their written order.

BARS. Two parallel bars, ‖ drawn across the lines denote the end of a strain. If dots are added, :‖, it denotes that the strain on the side preceding the dots must be repeated before playing the next strain.

DA CAPO AL FINE, is a musical term, literally signifying that the performer will again commence the piece, and finish at the word "FINE."

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The Man in the Moon.....
Charles Augustus.....
Her Age it was Red.....
Ting-ting-a-loo.....
The Female Skatist.....
Gospel Train is Coming.....
My Grandfather's Socks.....
Git Thee Gone Girl.....
Go Chain the Lion Down.....
Coal Black Rose, (duett).....
Hear de Lambs a Crying.....
Love, (comic solo).....
The Villain Still Pursued Her.....
Nobody Knows de Trouble I See.....
Hot Corn, &c., &c., &c.....

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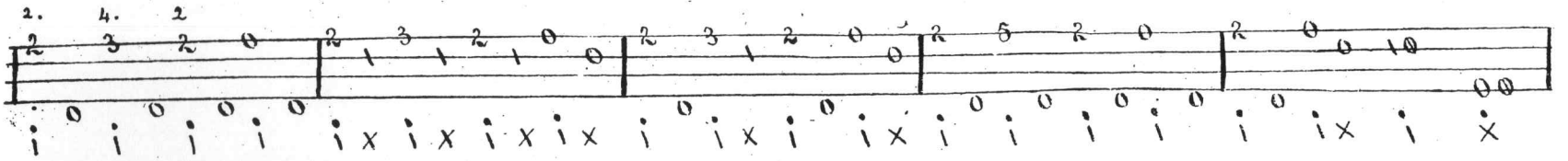
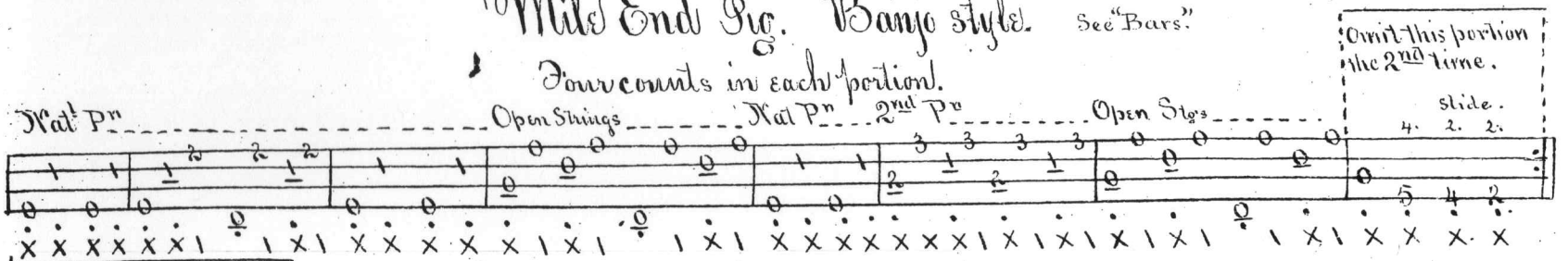
Five exercises for the Right Hand in the "Banjo" style.

Four counts in each portion. (measure).



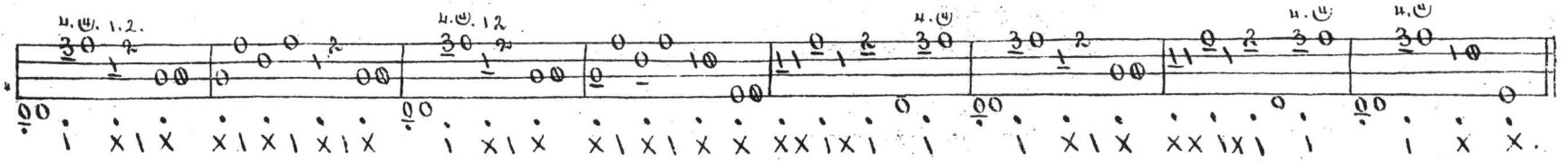
Mile End Fig. Banjo style. See "Bars."

Four counts in each portion.



Straight Fig. Banjo style.

Four counts in each portion.



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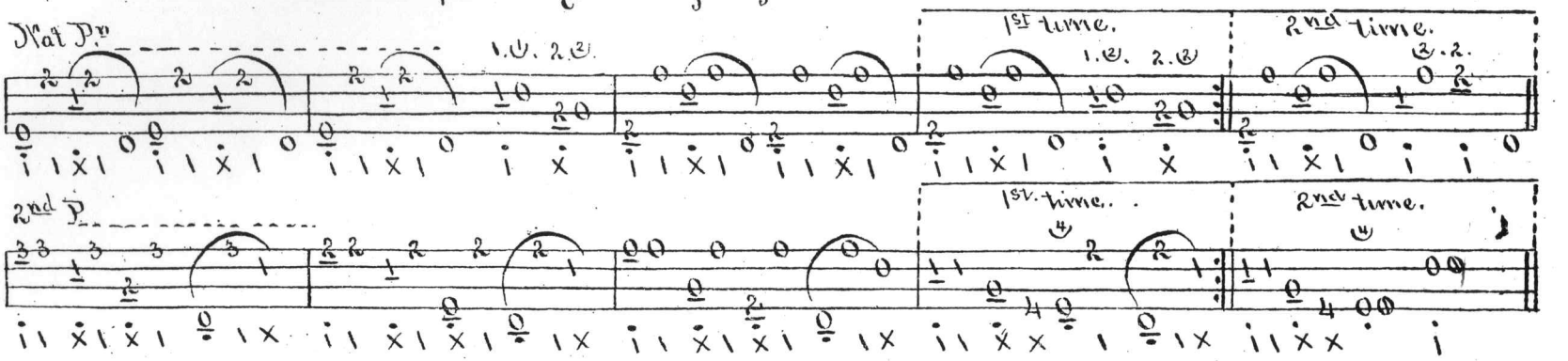
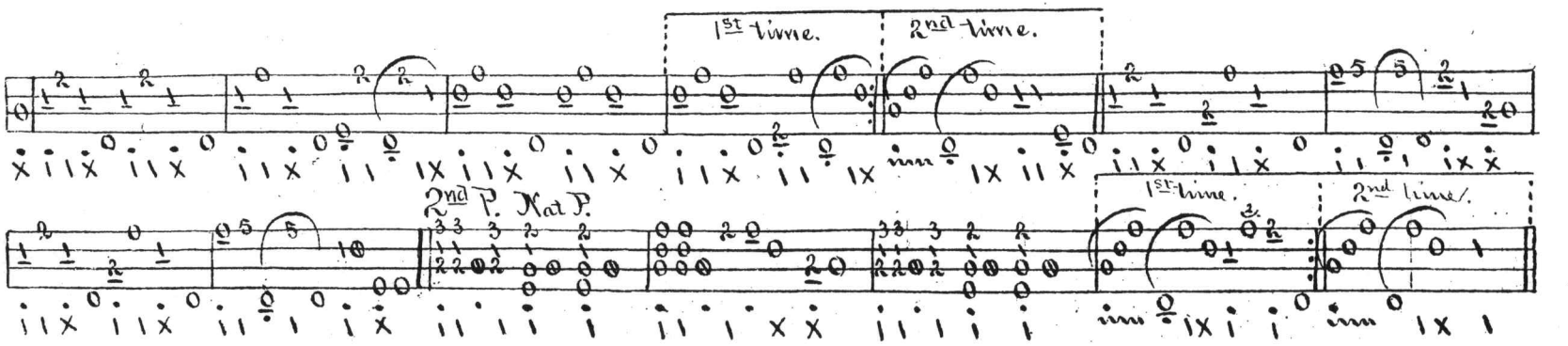
Philadelphia Jig. Banjo style. Four counts to the measure.



Green Corn Jig. Banjo style. Four counts to each measure.



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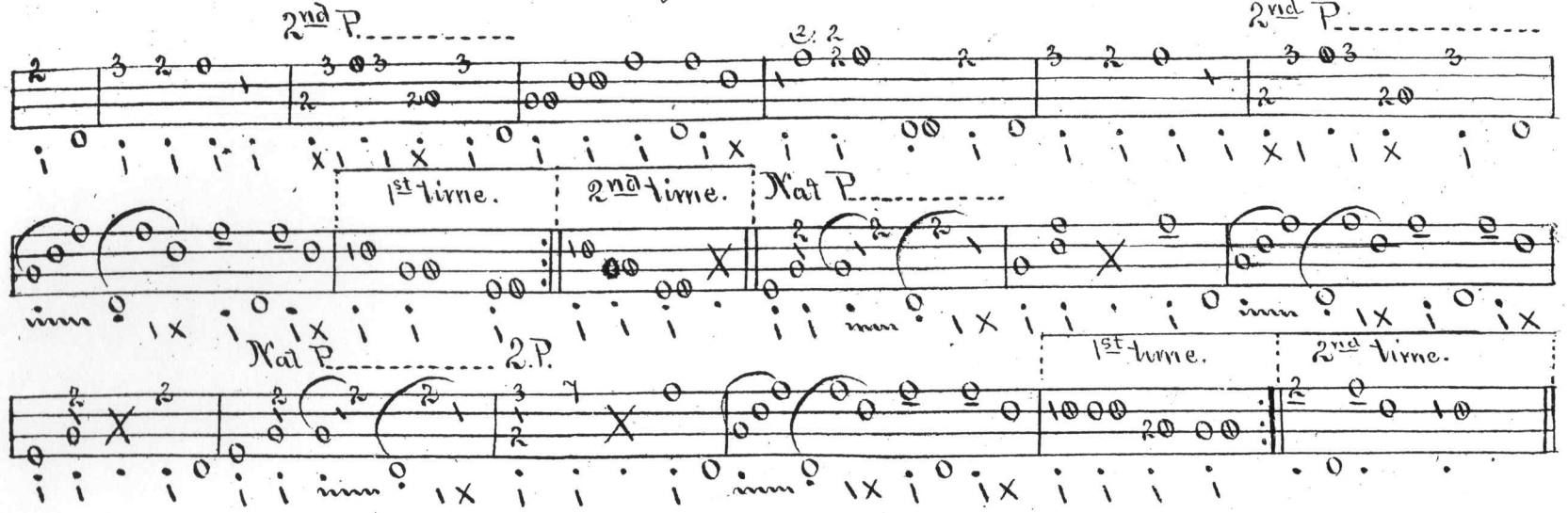
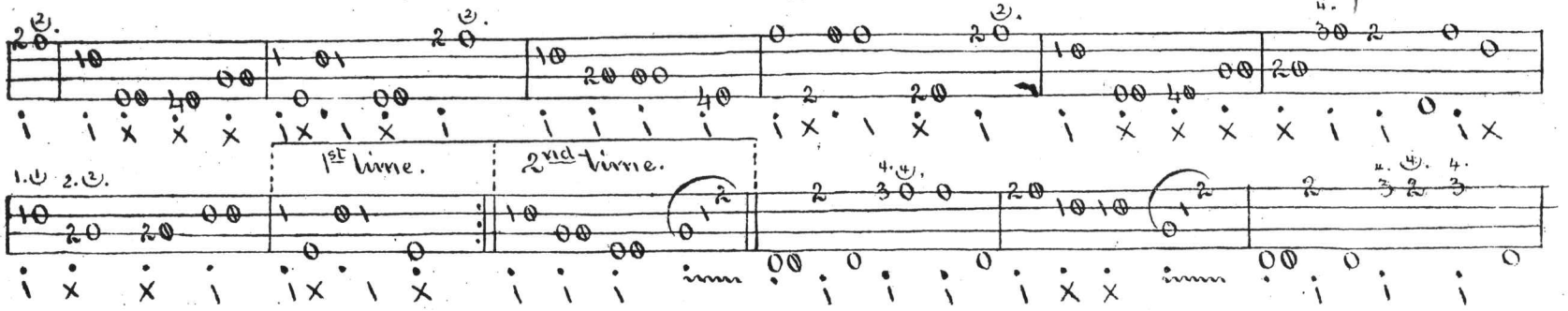
Carolina Reel. Banjo style. Four counts in each measure.

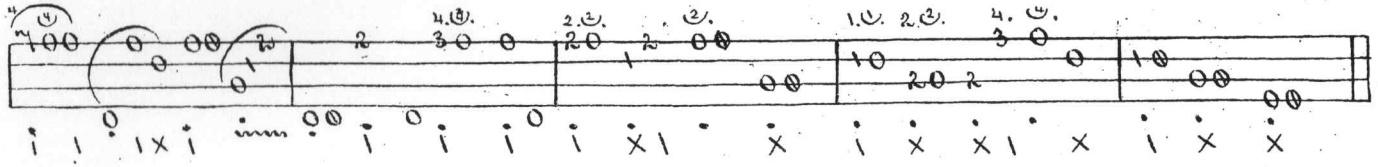


Rubec March. Banjo style. Four counts in each measure.



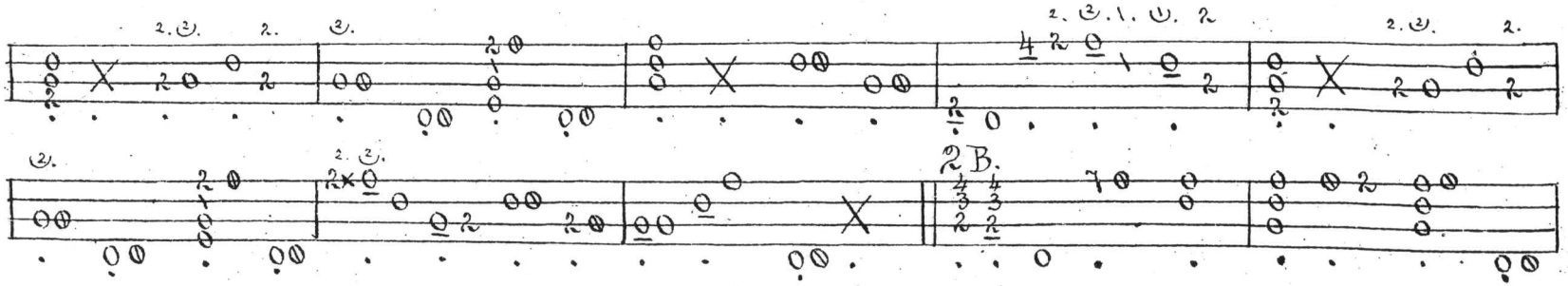
Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.

Quebec March continued.

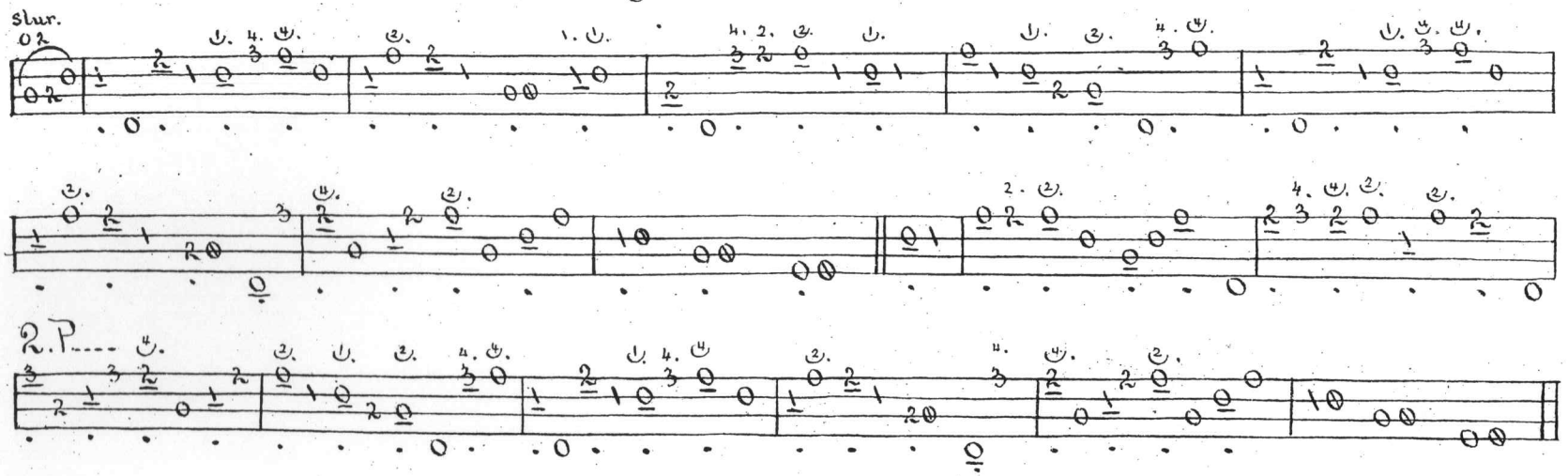


Anvil Polka. Guitar style.

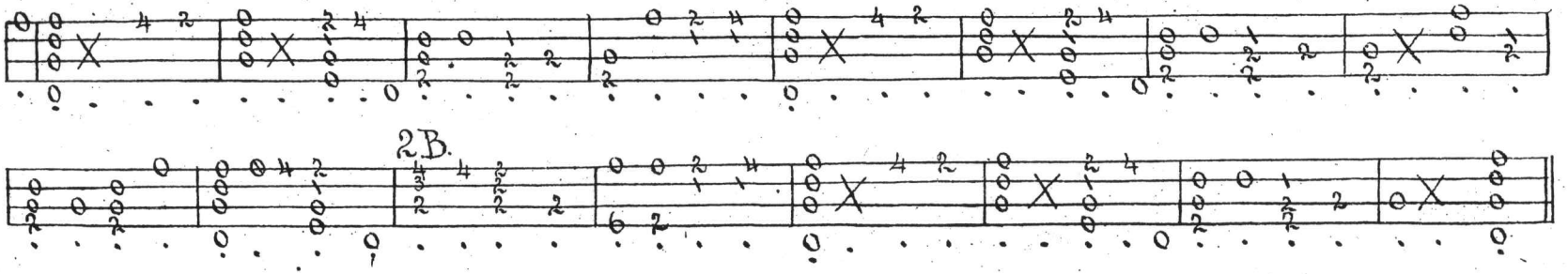
Swanee River. Guitar style.



Lancashire Clog Hornpipe. Guitar style.

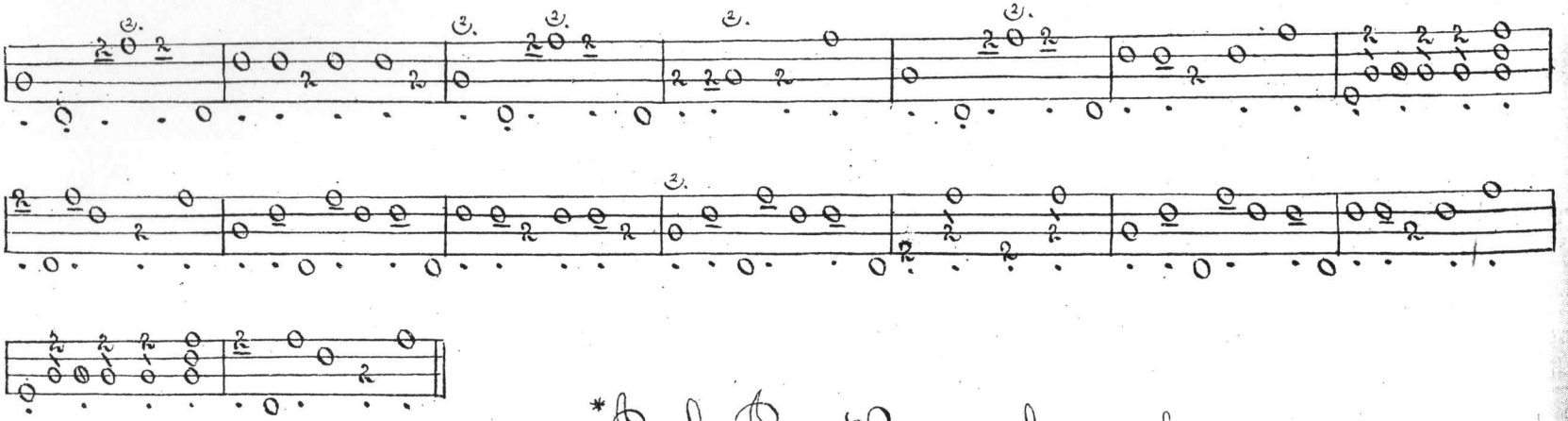


Blue Bells of Scotland. Guitar style.

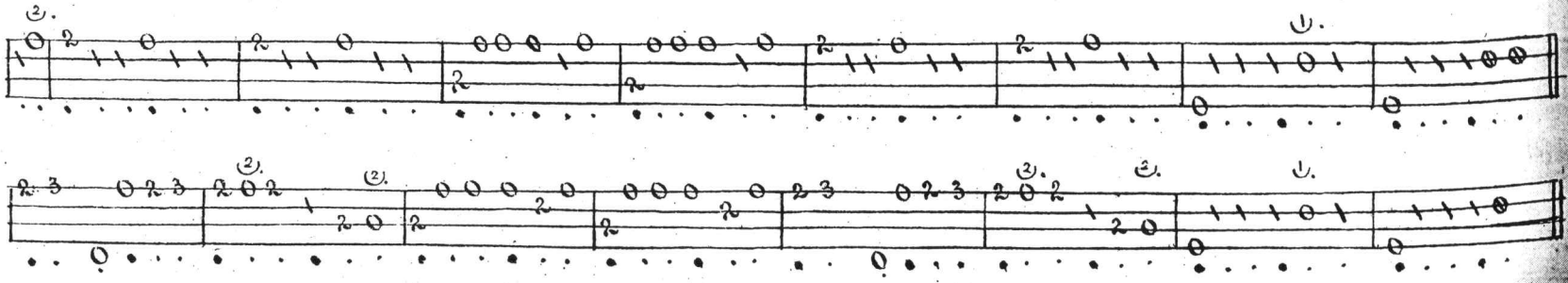


Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.

Virginia Reel.

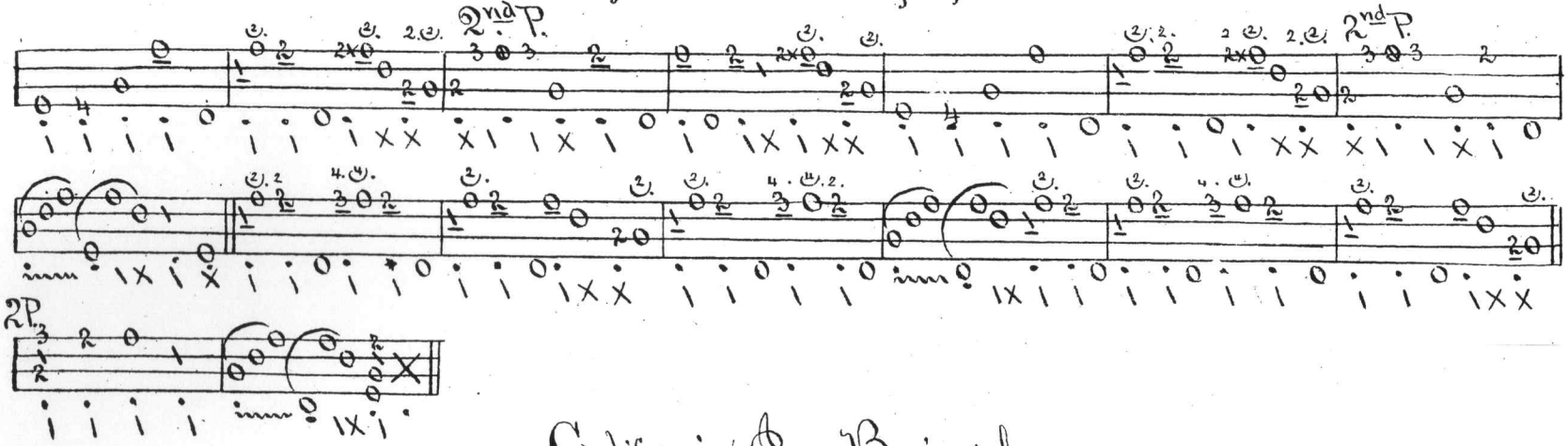


*Irish Jig. Banjo style. (see below).

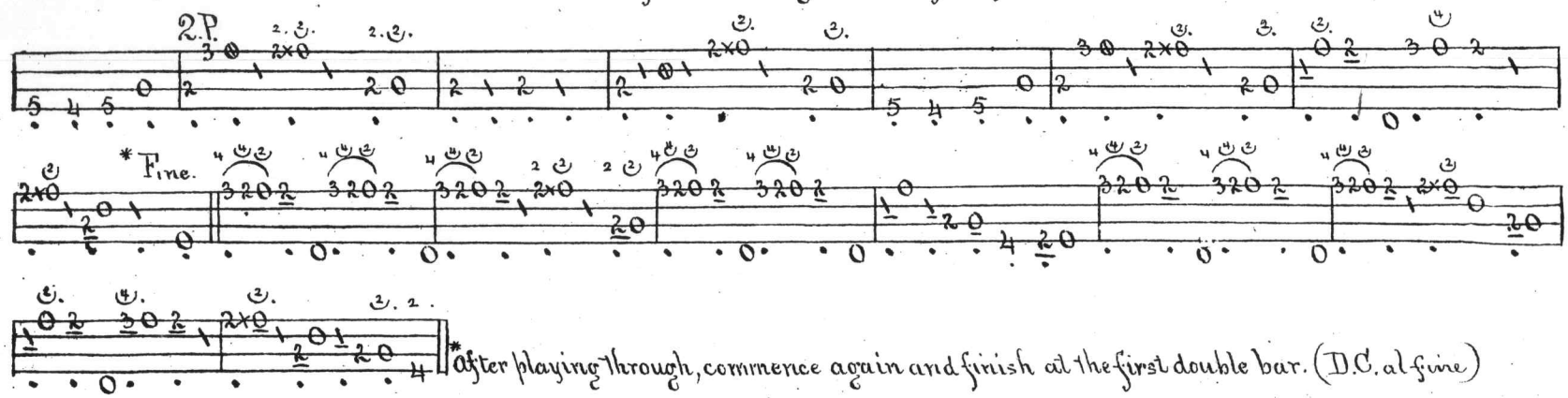


*Six counts in each measure. Beat on the 1st and 4th counts only. (the large dots). By counting the six counts aloud until the piece is acquired, the regularity of the movement will be the more easily maintained.

Dan Bryant's Reel. Banjo style.



California Org. Banjo style.

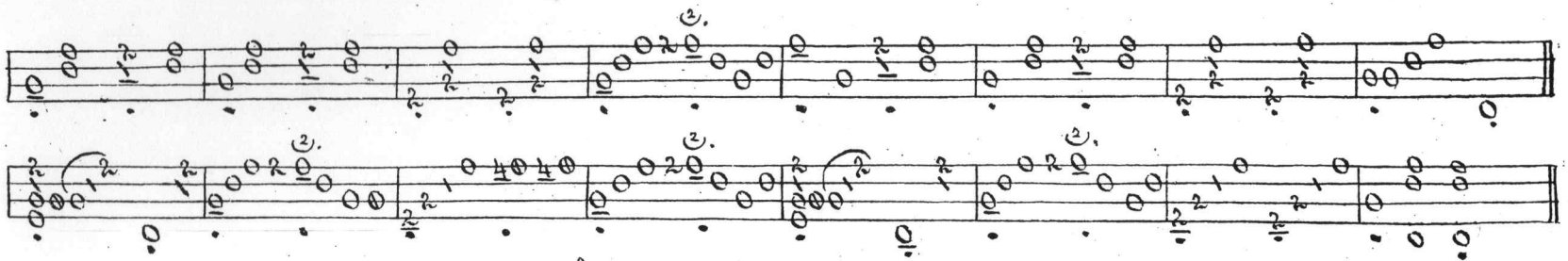


*After playing through, commence again and finish at the first double bar. (D.C. al fine)

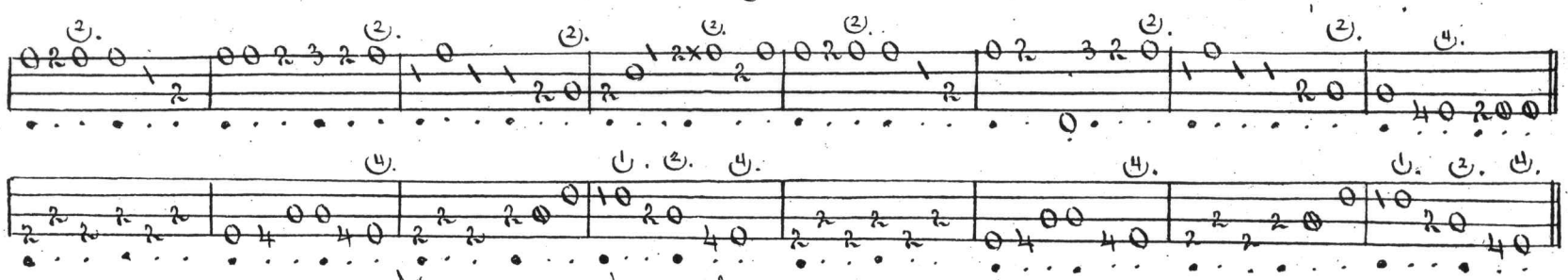
Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.

24.

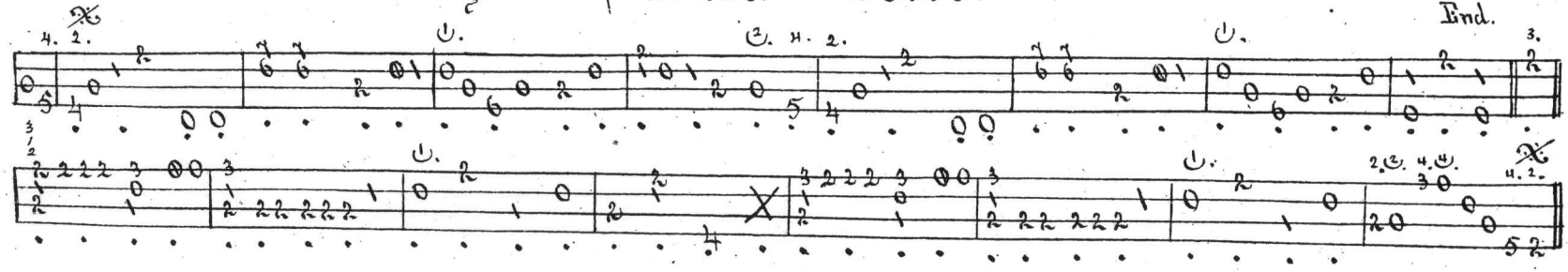
Bonfanti Polka. Guitar style.



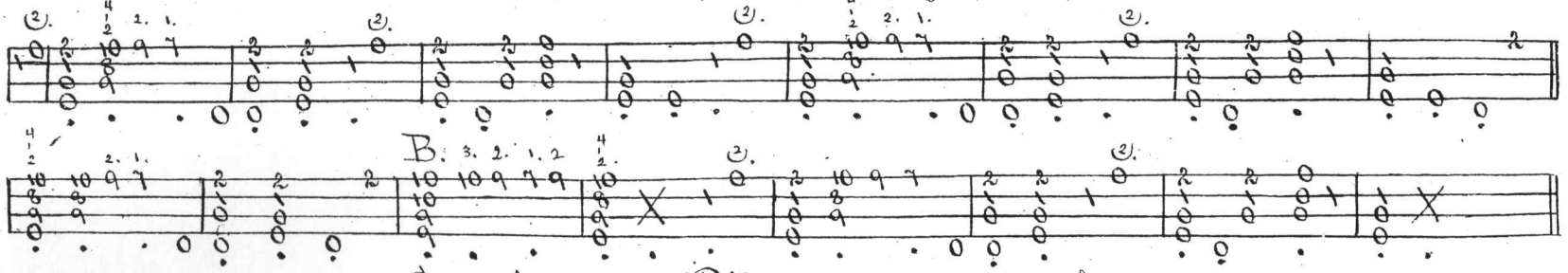
Donnybrook Jig. Irish. (see "Irish Jig," for rule.)



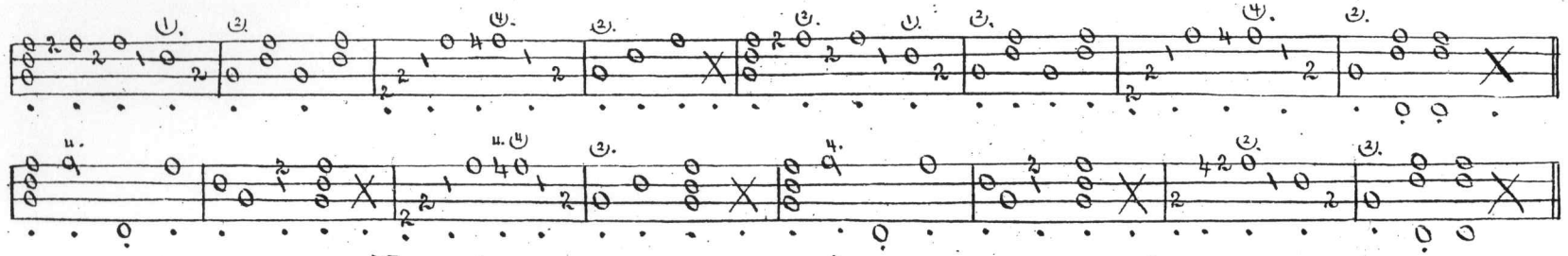
Mignonette Schottische. Four counts.



Last Rose of Summer. Guitar style. 3 counts in each measure.



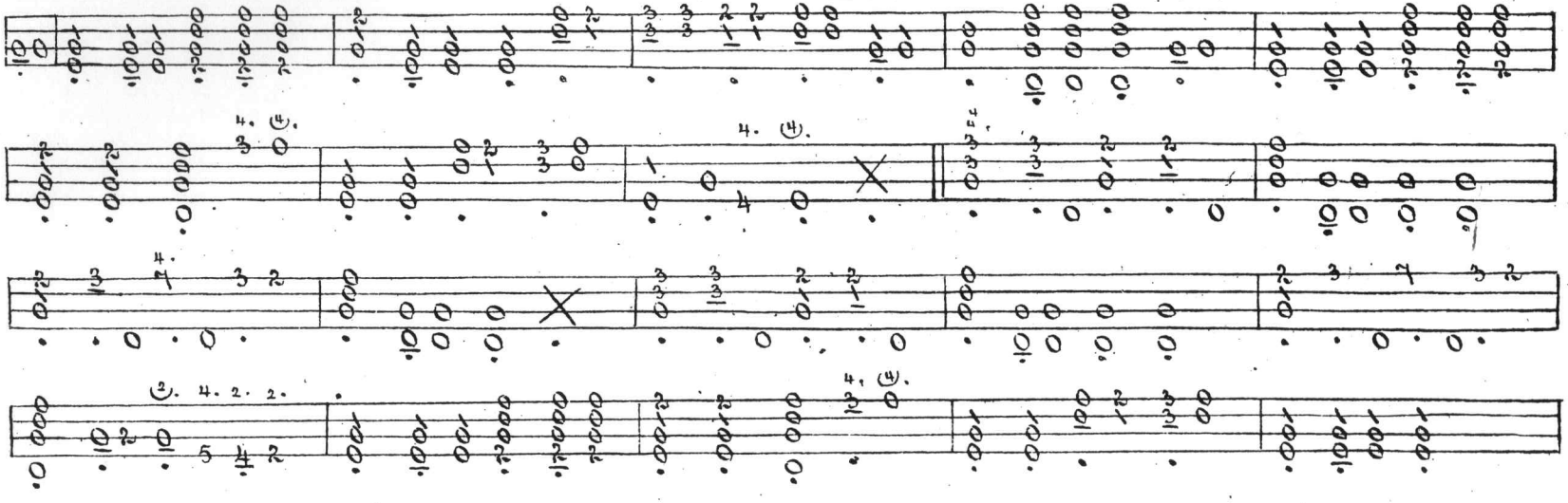
Sparkling Dew Polka. 4 counts in each measure.



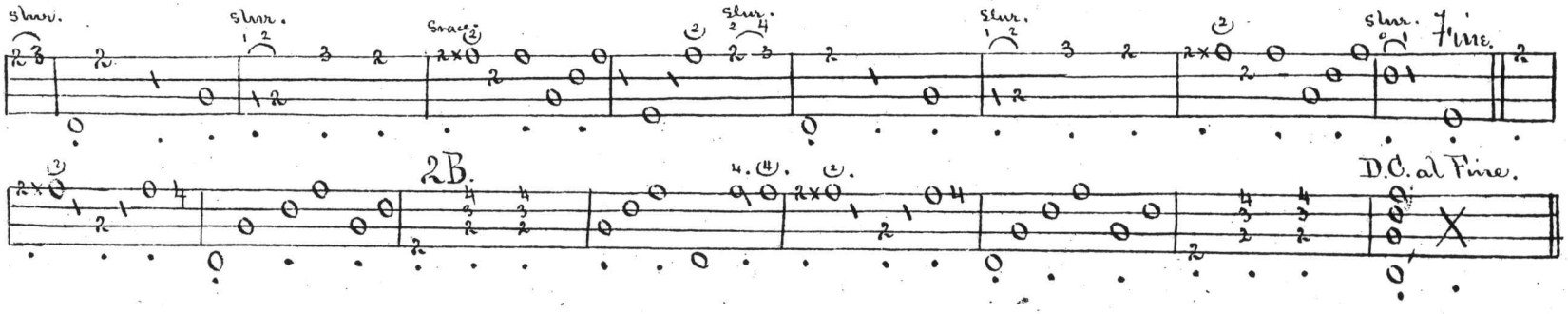
Rinse Waltz. 3 counts in each measure. Beat with the first counts only.

Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.

Parade March. 4 counts.

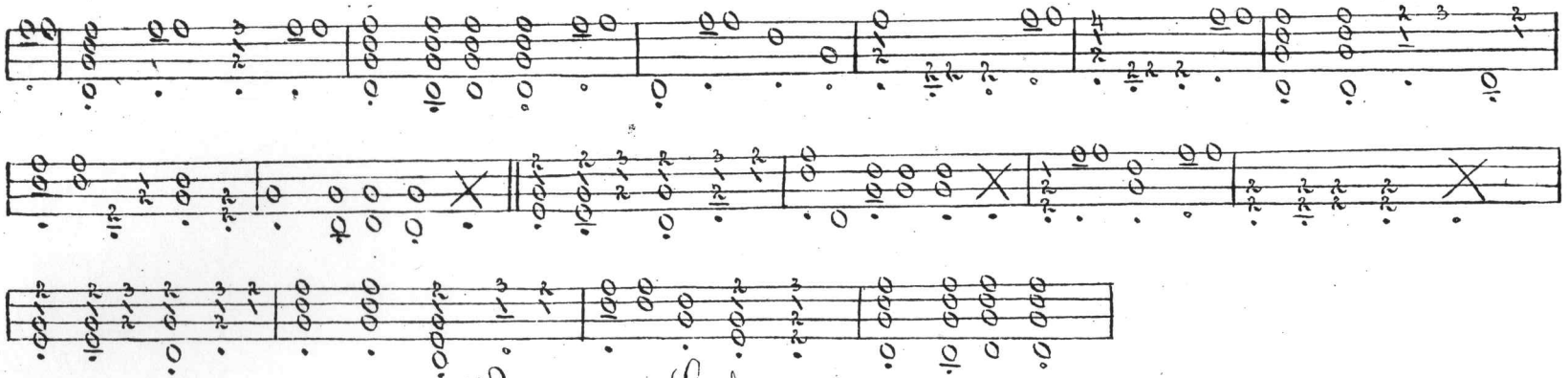


Estelle Waltz. 3 counts.



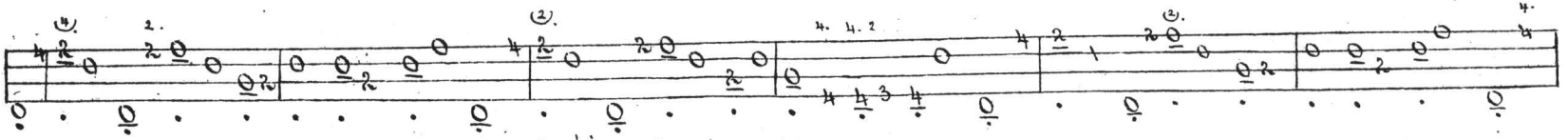
Amazon March. Four counts.

2 P.



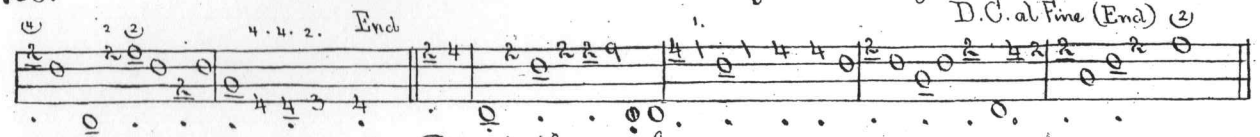
Broadway Galop. Four counts.

Early in the Morning, Jig. Four counts.

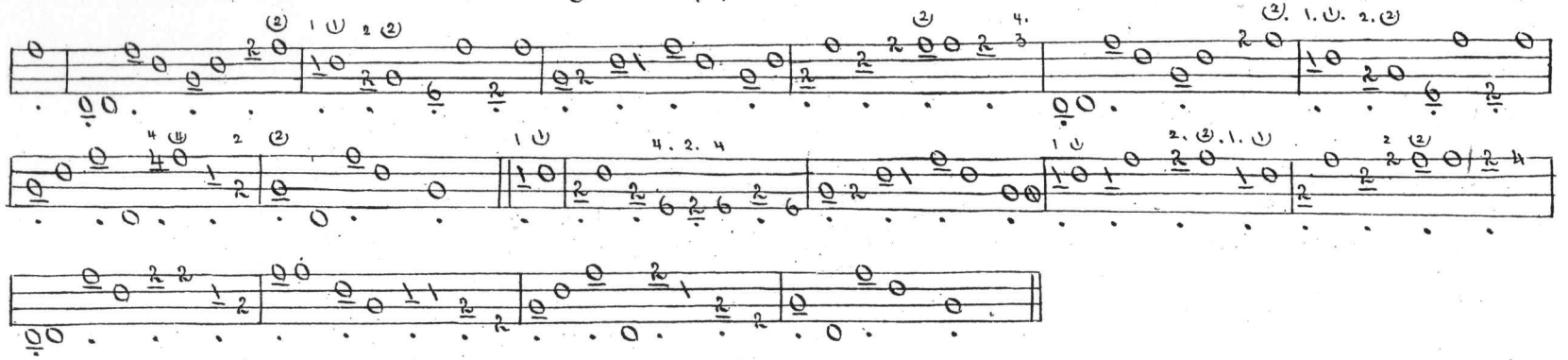


Continued on page 12.

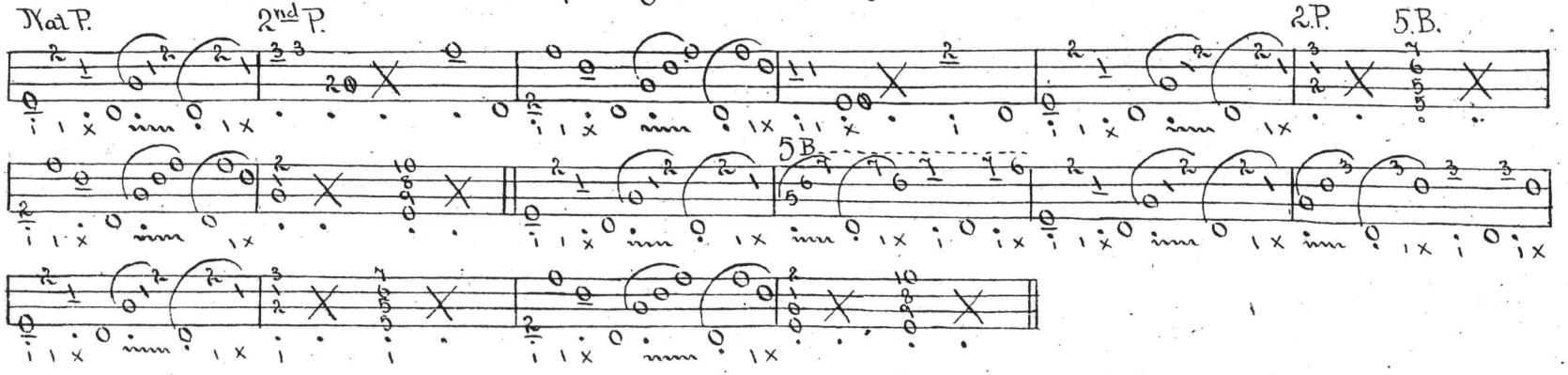
Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.



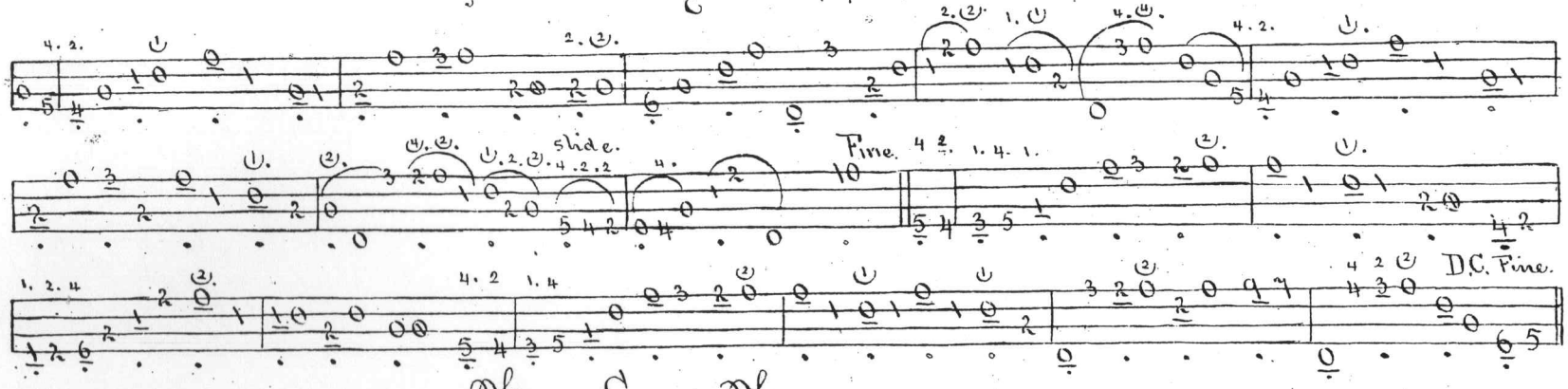
Royal Clog Hornpipe.



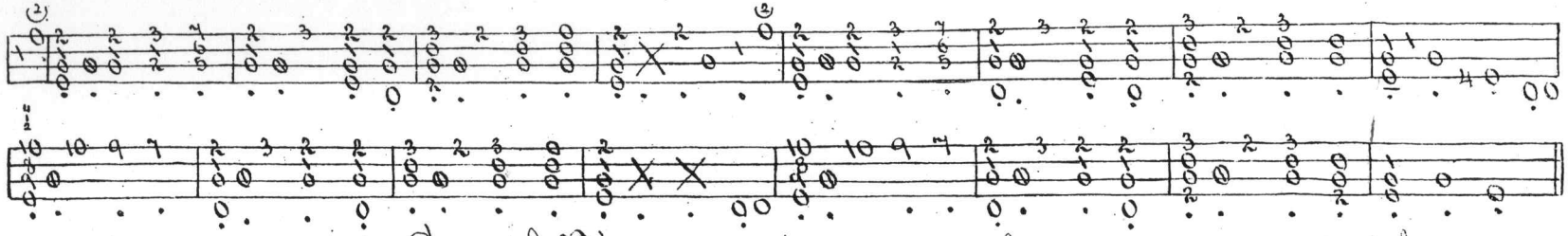
Stop Dig. Banjo style.



Billy Carters Clog Hornpipe.

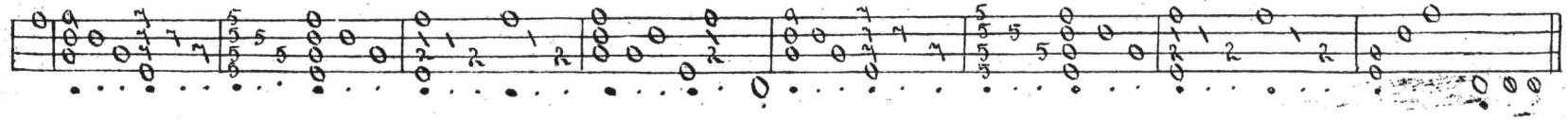


Home, Sweet Home.



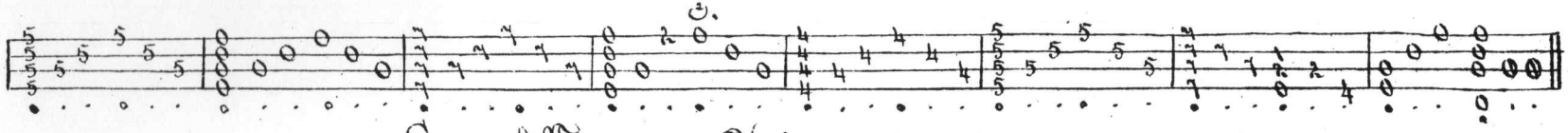
4th tuned up one tone.

Spanish Fandango. Six counts in each measure. See rule for Irish Jig.

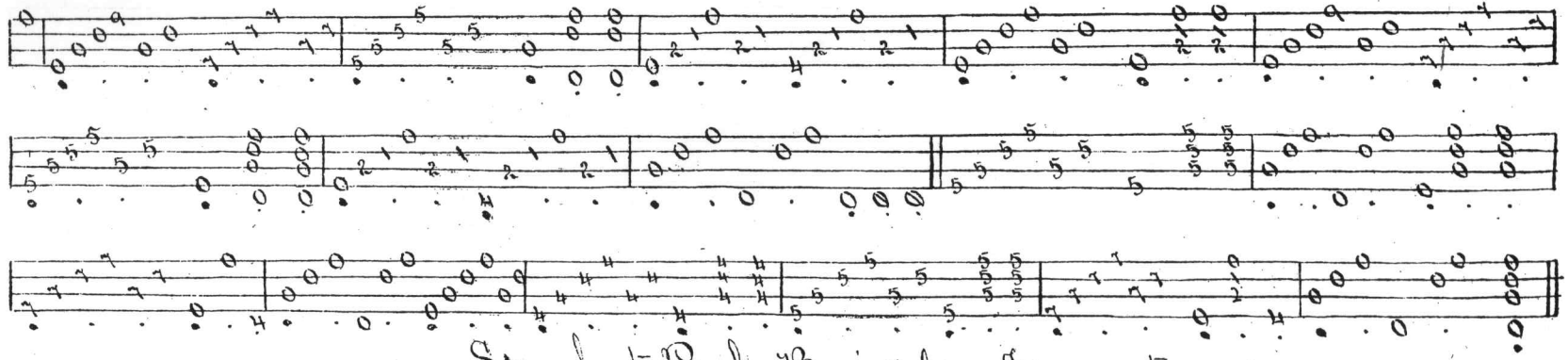


Frank B. Converse's Simplified Banjo Method.

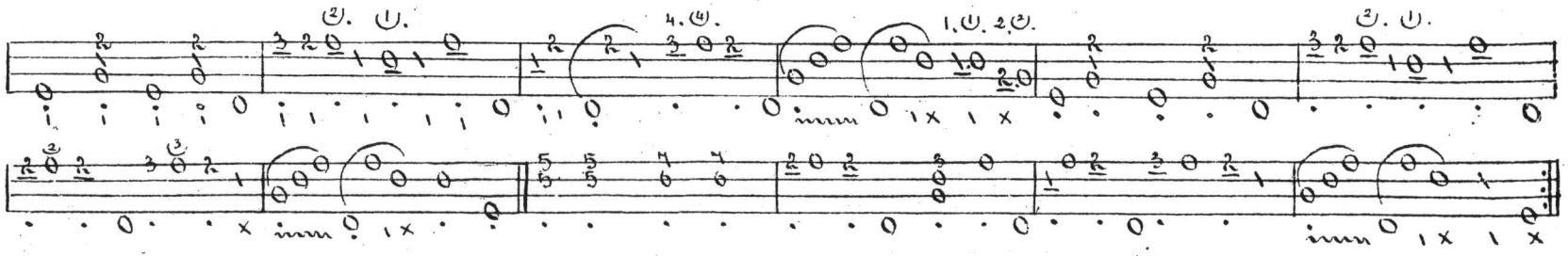
Spanish Fandango, Continued.



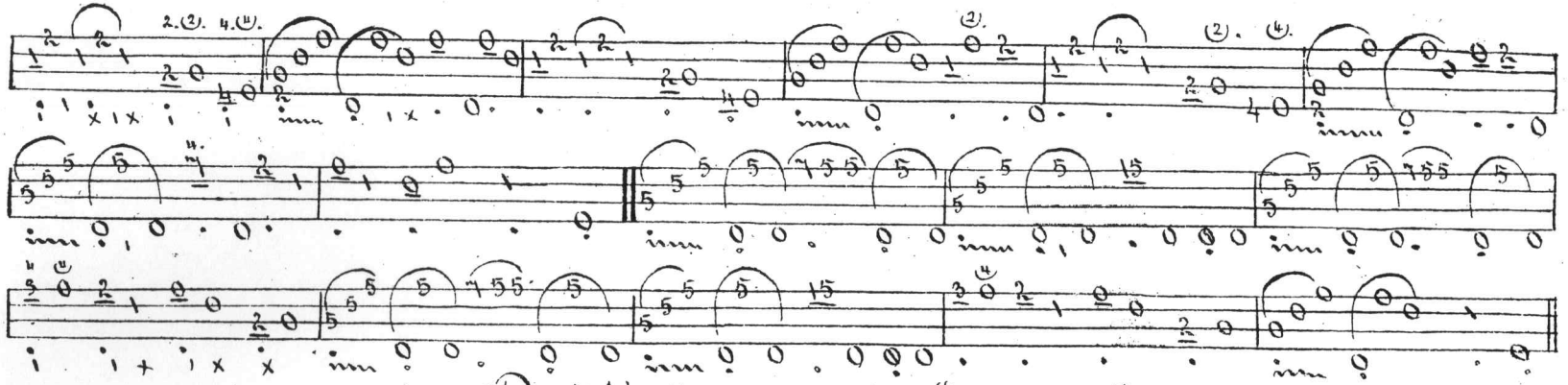
Spanish Fandango, Varied. Observe the two notes to a count.



Steamboat Reel. Banjo style. Four counts.



Mississippi Reel. Banjo style.



Pearl Waltz. For rule see "Aimee Waltz".

32.

"Little Butter Cups" Waltz. Pinafore.

Three counts. See Nine Waltz.

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